

Tom Horne
Superintendent

N.E.W.S

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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ARIZONA SCHOOLS CHIEF TOM HORNE ANNOUNCES ARIZONA STUDENTS ADVANCED PLACEMENT PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE RATES HIGHER THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE

PHOENIX (Wednesday, February 04, 2009) -- Arizona Schools Chief Tom Horne today announced that the increase in Arizona students participating in Advanced Placement programs and earning a passing score on the Advanced Placement test is higher than the national average. The numbers of Arizona students taking AP® tests during 2007-2008 rose 13.5%, compared with an 8.6% rise nationally, and the number of AP® tests taken in Arizona were up 13.6% compared to 8.7% nationally. Also, the numbers of Arizona students earning a passing score on the Advanced Placement tests rose 9.5%, compared with a 5.7% rise nationally.

Horne stated: “Unlike the federal government, which focuses solely on proficiency, my emphasis has also been on bringing those students who are already proficient to the highest level of which they are capable. The best predictor of college success is not grades, but the rigor of the curriculum that the student takes. For this reason, we have focused intense energy on encouraging more students to take a highly rigorous curriculum.”

The AP® test is an objective measure of student performance for the College Board’s Advanced Placement program. Students earning a minimum score of 3 on a scale from 1-5 on an AP® test can earn college credit, advanced placement, or both at most colleges and universities.

The gap between ethnic groups of Arizona students participating in Advanced Placement courses is closing. In 2003, non-white students made up 28% of Arizona’s AP® test takers—while in 2008 that percentage increased to 42%. Over the past several years, we have more than doubled the number of students from poverty who take advanced placement courses.

The Department of Education’s emphasis on encouraging more students to take a rigorous curriculum includes Arizona’s advanced placement incentive program AZ Aspires and the AP test fee programs in which fees are waived for students who cannot afford them.

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